

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4318

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6108

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJECT: COALITION TALKS

REF: TEL AVIV 5917

1. SUMMARY . PROSPECTS FOR NEW COLATION INCLUDING NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY WERE SUBSTANTIALLY ADVANCED WITH APPROVAL OCT 24 BY NRP CENTRAL COMMITTEE MOTHION TO JOIN COALTITION. WHILE CLAUSE IN NRP MOTION CONCERNING ITS RIGHT TO VITE IN KNESSET AGAINST WEST BANK TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS COULD POSE OBSTACLE TO CONCLUDING COALTION AGREEMENT, PM RABIN LIKELY TO FIND FORMULA ACCEPTABLE TO ALL SIDES, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW WIDESPREAD CONSENSUS AMONG MAJOR ELEMENTS IN CURRENT COALITION TO EXPAND PARLIAMENTARY BASIS OF GOVERNEMTN AND DESIRE OF KEY NRP LEADERS TO RETURN TO CABINET. END SUMMARY.

2. NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY(NRP) CENTRAL COMMITTEE OCT 24 APPROVED BY VOTE OF 301 TO 193 MOTION TO JOIN GOVERNEMENT COALTION. NRP CONCEDED TO TERMS OF PM RABIN THAT STATUS QUO ON RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS BE CONTINUED, WITH SPECIAL MINISEERIAL COMMITTEE TO SEEK SOLUTION OF CONTROVERSY OVER RECONNITION OF RELIGIOUS CONVERSIONS OF JEWISH IMMIGRANTS BY NON- ORTHODOX RABBIS. NRP MOTION HOWEVER STIPULATED THAT "NRP IN THE CABINET AND THE KNESSET WILL ADHRER TO ITS CONVETION
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DECISIONS AND ITS NATIONAL-RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES

AND WILL VOTE AGAINST TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL, OUR ANCESTRAL HERITAGE."

3. IN SUPPORTING RESOLUTION YITZHAK FARAEL URGED THAT NRP COULD BEST ADVANCE ITS INTERESTS WITHIN COALITION RATHER THAN REMAINING OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT. OPPOSITION GROUPS LEAD BY NRP YOUTH LEADER YEHUDA BEN MEIR AND ZERAH WARHAFTIG WARNED AGAINST SPLIT IN NRP AS RESULT OF JOINING COALITION.

4. NRP NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE WILL MEET NEXT WEEK WITH PM RABIN TO CONCLUDE COALITION AGREEMENT. YOUTH WING OF NRP IS SCHEDULED TO CONVENE OCT 27 TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT IT WILL ACCEPT CABINET MINISTERSHIP. YOUTH WING IS UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM GUSH EMUNIM AND GROUPS OF RELIGIOUS UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS TO SPLIT FROM PARTY. WHILE MOST OBSERVERS FEEL SPLIT AT THIS STAGE IS UNLIKELY, THE 40 PERCENT VOTE AGAINST JOINING COALITION INDICATES SUBSTANTIAL DISCONTENT IN NRP OVER JOINING COALITION UNDER PRESENT TERMS. RIFT IN NRP OVER RELIGIOUS AND TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS COULD READILY EMERGE AT LATER DATE.

5. NRP LEADERS REPORTEDLY SEE NO OBSTACLE TO CONCLUDING COALITION AGREEMENT AS RESULT OF CLAUSE ON RIGHT TO VOTE AGAINST WESTBANK TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS. FOLLOWING CENTRAL COMMITTEE VOTE, THEY EXPLAINED THAT ONCE IN GOVERNMENT THEY WOULD ACCEPT COALITION DISCIPLINE AND WOULD NOT SUPPORT OPPOSITION NO-CONFIDENCE MOTIONS.

6. COMMENT. DESPITE NRP "CLARIFICATION", CLAUSE ON TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS CERTAIN TO DRAW PROTEST FROM CURRENT COALITION PARTNERS. RABIN ALREADY HAS STATED THAT NRP WOULD HAVE TO ADHERE TO COALITION DISCIPLINE IN KNESSET VOTING, WITH QUESTION OF TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS IN AGREEMENT WITH JORDAN SUBJECT TO NATIONAL ELECTION. WHILE LAST-MINUTE DISAGREEMENTS WITH MAPAM AND ILP COULD UNHINGE COALITION AGREEMENT, PROSPECTS FOR RABIN FINDING FORMULA ACCEPTABLE TO ALL SIDES STILL SEEM FAVORABLE, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW WIDESPREAD CONSENSUS AMONG CURRENT COALITION PARTNERS FOR EXPANDED PARLIAMENTARY BASE AND FERVENT DESIRE OF TOP NRP LEADERS TO RETURN TO CABINET.

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